

**Political History Collection
Interview H.0053.04 : Tape 4**

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Gender: Male
Age: 81
Date of Birth: 1928

Abstract

Li Zuomin was the director [Ch. qu zhang] of the United Front Bureau [Tib. 'thab phyogs gcig gyur bu] in the Tibet Work Committee [Tib. bod las don; Ch. wei yuan; Tib. lhan khang]. He speaks fluent Lhasa dialect Tibetan and was the major Tibetan translator for the heads of the TWC. In this interview, Li Zuoming discusses the Dalai Lama's decision regarding whether he should stay in India or go back to Tibet. He then discusses in detail the Dalai Lama's indecisiveness about where to go, and how it resulted in 6 members of his entourage meeting in the Chinese Embassy to decide what to do. He also talks about the Dedön Tshogpa's petition to the Kashag and the secret code book that was later given to the Kashag. He then briefly discusses the trouble between the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama and disagreements that they had and also the desire to assassinate Ngabö. Finally, he describes the revolt in 1959 and the Dalai Lama's role in starting it.

Tape 4

Q: When the Dalai Lama went to India, there was a lot of talk saying he will stay in India or he will go back to Tibet. Regarding this, we have already talked a lot which was very useful. However, I am not sure about one thing. I have a documents on the Dalai Lama's talk with Zhou Enlai where you were the interpreter, right?

A: Yes.

Q: It seems to me that Zhou Enlai didn't ask the Dalai Lama openly (Tib. ngösu [Tib. dngos su]) whether he is going back or not. And the Dalai Lama also didn't tell him that he is going back. Is that right?

A: That is right. What the two of them said to each other was like a riddle [Tib. gab tshig]. For example, when Zhou Enlai talked to the Dalai Lama, the main point (Tib. nyingpo [snying po]) was that he said "You are a deity in the religion of Tibet. When the deity is in the temple, the deity will have dignity and efficacy [Tib. nyams dang nus pa]. But when the deity gets separated from the temple, then it becomes ordinary mud and an ordinary person and there will be no dignity (Tib. dzignyam [rdzig nyams] for the deity. This was the point of what Zhou Enlai said. He meant to say that if he [Dalai Lama] goes back, he will be the deity. After having the meal, at the end, he [Zhou Enlai] said "Your deity's realm [Tib. lha khams] is in Lhasa and not in India and not even in Kalimpong." At that time, in Kalimpong, several thousand Tibetans from Nepal and Buthan had been gathered there. [Zhou Enlai] said, "In case, you [Dalai Lama] didn't go back and stay in India or Kalimpong, or in Sikkim, you will be separated from Lhasa. Then you will become an ordinary refugee (Tib. yügyar [yul gyar]) and you will not have the dignity and the efficacy of the deity. According to my understanding, this was the point. [Zhou Enlai] didn't tell him [Dalai Lama] clearly that you must go back , because he was a politician and his talk had lot of meaning [Tib. go rgyu].

Q: He [Zhou Enlai] just told him [Dalai Lama] that it will be good go back, but he didn't tell him you must go back and he also didn't ask him "are you going back?" right?

A: Yes. His [Zhou Enlai] main point had a lot of meaning, right?

Q: Yes. As for the Dalai Lama, he was not sure whether to go back and it was like one day, he thinks of going back and one day he thinks of staying.

A: Yes, you are right. At that time, on the one hand, the way the Dalai Lama talked was like he was feeling uneasy [Tib. ba re be re] and secondly whether he should go back or not, he pushed it [Tib. mgo la g.yogs] onto the Shapes and the officials (Tib. pönrg)

[dpon rigs]).

Q: What do you mean? the Shape?

A: At that time, there was a leader's team [Tib. 'go khrid tshogs chung] among his entourage which consisted of 6 people including, three Shapes: Surkhang, Wangchen Gelek, Dokhar [Tib. mdo mkhar] and Ngabö, Ngawang Jigme [Tib. nga phod ngag dbang 'jigs med] and Drönyerchemmo Phala, Jigyab Khembo Gadrang [Tib. dga' brang] and Drunychemmo Rong Namsey [Tib. rong nam sras]. The team leader [Ch. zu zhang] was Ngabö. When the Dalai Lama talked with Premier Zhou, he said "I can't make the decision as to whether to go back or not. I don't have the authority." At that time, there were about 100 officials in the entourage from all the ranks. He [Dalai Lama] said, "It depends on the members of the entourage. If the members of the entourage agree, I would have to go [Tib. nga rang 'gro rgyu red]. If they didn't agree, it is hard for me to decide [Tib. nga rang thag bcad khag po red]."

Q: Did the Dalai Lama say that? Are you sure?

A: Yes. I am sure. He certainly said that. And because he said that, Premier Zhou called the 6 members of the leader's team to the office of the Chinese Embassy and talked with them for 2 or 3 hours.

Q: Then what happened?

A: When they talked, it was strange. They [leader's team] said a lot of about their dislikes (Tib. magawa [Tib. ma dga' ba]) regarding the work on Tibet and the Dalai Lama also said that. Their spokesman was Surkhang, because he was the senior Shape, although the team leader was Ngabö. However, since the senior Shape was Surkhang, he represented the 6 members and spoke.

Q: In the beginning, when they met in the Embassy, did Zhou Enlai talk first?

A: Yes.

Q: When they gave the answer, the 6 members discussed it and then Surkhang spoke, right?

A: Yes. The Dalai Lama threw the responsibility onto the leader's team and made them discuss it, saying it's up to them.

Q: The Dalai Lama was not at this meeting, right?

A: Yes. This meeting was held separately.

Q: You mean with 6 members, right?

A: Yes.

Q: After Zhou Enlai talked, did he just stay there when they were discussing?

A: When they were discussing, Zhou Enlai wasn't there. Zhou Enlai talked with the Dalai Lama separately and when the Dalai Lama had to answer Zhou Enlai, he [Dalai Lama] said that we have to meet [with the leader's team] so the talk between Zhou Enlai and Dalai Lama was stopped there. After that, Zhou Enlai sent a message to the 6 members and told them that the Dalai Lama said like this. So you have to get prepared and come to our Chinese Embassy.

Q: Did this happen on the same day?

A: This happened on the second day. A very strange thing happened. I wouldn't know what they talked about internally, but when Zhou Enlai called the 6 members to the embassy and talked with them, Surkhang represented the 6 members and put forward their comments/suggestions/criticisms (Tib. samchar [bsam 'char]). Surkhang looked around and rubbed his hands and just said one thing saying, "The Dalai Lama ordered us, the 6 members, to discuss whether the Dalai Lama should go back or not." Then he just stopped for a few minutes and said, "What shall I say? I forgot what to say next." Surkhang acted like this. Then Surkhang called Ngabö, "younger relative," or Ola [Tib. o lags] and said "I forgot it. Please say it for me." He was so cunning. Then Ngabö was angry and said "Now, I will say it." I never thought that Ngabö would talk so aggressively [Tib. ngarpo]. Ngabö gave very aggressive comments saying, "Now, whether the Dalai Lama should go back or not depends on whether the situation of Tibet is good or not. Because at the time of the democratic reforms in Kham, they arrested and killed many people indiscriminately, and so the revolt took place in Kham and a large number of people fled and now Tibet is full of these people. However, we don't have the situation like they had in Kham and Amdo, and we, the Kashag, don't have any responsibility for this; this is related the responsibility of the Central Committee [Ch. zhongyang]. They fled because they had trouble when the democratic reform were done. We can't deal with this, and we don't have the authority to solve this because this is related to the Central Committee [Ch. zhongyang]. So whether the Dalai Lama should go back or not depends on the situation in Tibet. If everything is well done [by zhongyang], the people who fled to Tibet will go back and we can also go back to Tibet. If these people stay in Tibet, we can't handle them (take ownership over them) [Tib. bdag po rgyag thub kyi ma red]. I neither have any hopes and doubts nor any suggestions [Tib. re dwogs med bsam 'char med] [on this]." This is the main point of what he said. He said that "this depends on how the Central Committee changes its policy."

Q: Did Ngabö say anything about the democratic reforms in Tibet?

A: Yes, he spoke about the mistakes that had been made when they did the democratic reform in Kham, Qinghai (Tshongön [Tib. mtsho sngon]) and Gansu and killed many people indiscriminately when they quelled the revolt in those places. If the Central Committee settles this matter well, those who fled to Tibet will return home. After they have returned, then we can talk with the

Central Committee about how and when we will do the democratic reforms in Tibet. If this root problem is not solved, other problems cannot be solved. Ngabö also used a Tibetan proverb, "The donkey was let go first [on the ice] and then they put on dirt and dust [on the ice] [Tib. bongbu sngon dang sa thal rjes]. If you let the donkey go on the ice, it will slip and fall. But if you put dirt and dust before the donkey goes, then it won't slip. He was implying that after the revolt had occurred, you can't solve it like putting earth and dust on the ice after the donkey has gone. The Chinese also have a similar proverb, "Firing the cannon after the horse." [Ch. ma houpao]. It means firing the old style cannon while it is loaded on the horse cart.

Q: Ngabö said this so strongly, right?

A: He said that very aggressively.

Q: What did Zhou Enlai answer?

A: I will tell you the full answer given by Zhou Enlai. He said, "I understand the main point of your comments. According to your perspective (Tib. tatang [lta stangs]), you are thinking that the Dalai Lama didn't have any fault and all the fault falls on the Central Committee's side regarding the democratic reforms and quelling the revolt. In fact, this is not the case. The Central Committee does not have the responsibility for the democratic reforms and for the occurrence of revolt. However, in doing the democratic reforms, there was mistake of being too leftist (Tib. yönlung [g.yon lhung]). Furthermore, when they quelled the revolt, they killed people indiscriminately. However, this is not a mistake of the Central Committee's policy, but occurred when the local cadres implemented the Central Committee's policy mistakenly. So the Central Committee can solve this and make it correct. However, if you use this as a pretext and say that the Dalai Lama will not go back, these two are separate matters." Did you understand what I said?

Q: Please say it again. First he said that the democratic reform is not a mistake, right?

A: He said that the peaceful democratic reform should be done in all the Tibetan nationality areas and the policy which said that we must do the democratic reform is not wrong. And the policy of quelling the revolt is also not wrong, but when they implemented the policy, there was a leftist work style done so the local cadres made mistakes. This was a mistake and the Central Committee will correct these mistakes. However, you should not use this as pretext and say that Dalai Lama will not go back. He said that these two should not be mixed together. In short, Zhou Enlai didn't say things clearly.

Q: Isn't this talk also aggressive?

A: The one who talked very strong and aggressively was Ngabö. He said all the bad things. After that, there was an incident.

Q: When Zhou Enlai said that, what did those Shape answer? What did Ngabö say?

A: After Zhou Enlai said that, Ngabö didn't say anything else and he just said "Anyway, we have told all of our comments and this is related to the Central Committee so it is up to the Central Committee to decide how to rectify it. We don't have any other comments." In 1960-1961, the Central Committee held a national meeting regarding nationality work [Tib. mi rigs las don gyi tshogs 'du] where they discussed the matters of religion and nationality of about 50 nationalities in China. Zhou Enlai presided over the meeting and gave the opening speech on the guidelines and the principal policy of the Central Committee. At that meeting, there were representatives from nationwide and after two days, when the representatives were discussing this after dividing up into teams, one evening Zhou Enlai purposely called Ngabö and asked him what comments he had? At that time, as soon as Ngabö met Zhou Enlai, he voluntarily confessed before Zhou Enlai said anything. Ngabö said "At that time, when I was in India, I got together [Tib. 'thab] with those people and in a desperate situation I had to say that comment as the team leader of the leader's team and I had to even scold the Central Committee. That was my mistake. At that time, I thought that if I didn't say that, they (the others) will cause trouble and will not let the Dalai Lama return. If I said something aggressive, then they will not have anything to say to me. Although I was thinking in that way, but since I have said such aggressive things, I want to apologize to you." Zhou Enlai laughed and told Ngabö, "Even at that time, I knew that it was not your real thoughts. You are not to be blamed. So you don't need to confess your faults."

Q: After Zhou Enlai and the Kalöns met and the Kalön left, what did you party members talk about? Did you talk about what the meeting like and what shall we do?

A: We didn't have an internal discussion because at that time, we would not meddle into the party and there were no Chinese high ranking officials among the ones who were accompanying the Dalai Lama. We didn't have a Party organization there but there was a counselor [Ch. canzan] called Ye Chengzhan who was next to the ambassador there. He was a nice old person who was highly qualified on politics.

Q: Was he there when Zhou Enlai gave the talk?

A: No. And he would not meddle into this.

Q: Did Zhou Enlai ask you what do you think?

A: Since I was the interpreter, he would not ask me that. Basically, I was not sent by the government to be the interpreter; the Dalai Lama recommended me when Zhang Jingwu gave the seeing off party. While I was there, Zhang Jingwu told the Dalai Lama that right now he received a telegram from the Central Committee saying that the Central Committee is not going to send an interpreter and he can take whichever interpreter he liked to and the Dalai Lama then pointed to me and said, "He is the best." Then they put me on the name list of the entourage.

Q: Yes, you told me that. That was good for you I think. Do you think that was good?

A: I had a very hard time.

Q: After Zhou Enlai met the Kalöns, did they meet the Dalai Lama again?

A: No.

Q: What did you people think about the Dalai Lama going back or not?

A: This was a matter discussed inside the embassy. They were saying that we should not insist him [to the Dalai Lama] and we should not tell him whether to go back or not to go back, because Premier Zhou had already told him the principles and the main points. So if we say something in addition to that, it will be useless. At that time, the ambassador was Pan Sidi. Though I was not sent by the Central Committee, since I am a party member and a cadre, at that time I stayed in the house of Pan Sidi. The foreign ambassadors had a very comfortable residence with separate courtyards.

Q: When the people in the embassy said that we should not insist to him [the Dalai Lama], what did Zhou Enlai say?

A: This was not the Zhou Enlai's opinion [Tib. dgongs 'char], it was just the opinion of the people in the embassy. That was said by Pan Sidi and we don't know whether it was the the Central Committee's opinion. Most probably, that was the Central COMmittee's opinion.

Q: They [Tibetan officials] did lot of strange things when they were in India and I even heard that when the Kalön were there [to India], they had a secret code book [Tib. gsang ba'i tar deb] made and when they came to Shigatse, Ragashag gave this secret code book to the [Chinese] government, saying this was mistake [Tib. 'di nga tshos nor ba red]. Is this right?

A: Yes, this is right.

Q: Then what happened with this secret code book?

A: This was a different matter. At that time, Ngabö came out and did a lot of work after he told those aggressive things to Zhou Enlai. At that time, among the entourage, Ngabö was the only one who had a firm standpoint and a clear point of view [Tib. lang phyog brtsan po dang lta stangs gsal po] saying that we must protect the unity [Tib. gcig gyur la srung skob]. Before that, Ngabö had been isolated [Tib. sku rkyang grogs med kher rkyang] [Ch. gu li].

Q: What do you mean by that?

A: In the beginning, when they were saying that the Dalai Lama should stay there and he should not return, at that time, among the leader's team, Ngabö was the only one who had a unchangeable opinion [Tib. 'gyur ba med pa'i bsam 'char]. I don't need to mention about Surkhang, and Dokhar was like shaking [Tib. yam me yom me] [laughter], but he was a very kind hearted person. I am very much familiar with him. and Ngabö became isolated. When Zhou Enlai met them, Ngabö might have understood [the point] [Tib. mgo 'tshos] that Zhou Enlai was saying, that is, if the Dalai Lama stayed in India there will be no future (Tib. dünlam [mdun lam]). Then Ngabö did a lot of work among the 50 some odd other Tibetan Government officials with ranks in the entourage. First, he also held a meeting of the leader's team and he said "We have already told Zhou Enlai very clearly what we need to say. Actually, Surkhang should have said that, but I reported it. Do you have any comments on that? They said it was well done. [laughter] Now among ourselves internally, our thoughts have become united. Tell me your opinions clearly without concealing anything and then we will find a way to work on it. Do you think it would be good for the Dalai Lama to go back or do you think it would be good to stay? If all of you say that the Dalai Lama must stay, then my attitude is very clear and I am going back. Then you can do whatever you like. From today, I am not going to the team leader of the leader's team and I am going to the Dalai Lama and ask for leave and I am going back." I knew that because Ngabö told me this on sly. The two of us had a lot of relations and connections (Tib. drewa ['brel ba]).

Q: When was that? Were you in Kolkata or Delhi?

A: We were in Delhi at the hotel that was called something like Hetelapa? It was where the Dalai Lama stayed.

Q: Was this on the next day?

A: This was after 3-4 days.

Q: They held a big meeting, right? And after that, Ngabö told you that, right?

A: Yes. Ngabö and I would meet once every 2-3 days. What should I say? It was like a secret connection. At that time, he told me that. Ngabö said very aggressively and according to the religion, and they have to swear an oath, so he said, "If you all are saying that you are going [back], you have to swear an oath and if you are saying that you not going, you have to swear an oath. All of you must think what are you going to do." Then the members of the leader's team said that it would be better to go back. Otherwise, if we stay in India, probably, there will be a great danger." Ngabö said, "So, if you think in that way, you must educate (Tib. lobso tang [Tib. slob gso gtong] the members of the entourage."

Q: The 6 members of the team decided to go back after Ngabö told them to swear an oath, right?

A: Yes, Ngabö told them, "If our opinion became united, you must educate the people in the entourage who you have relations with. And on the day when all people's thought becomes united, then we will have a big meeting." After 3-4 days, they held the big meeting of all the members of entourage where there were a little more than 30-40 who had the rank between the 6th-4th level. And then Ngabö swore an oah at the meeting saying that he is not staying at all and he is going back and that he has made his decision.

Q: Where did they hold this big meeting? Was it in Kolkata or Delhi?

A: It was in the Grand Hotel in Kolkata. Since then, the Tibetan Welfare Association (the Dedön Tsogpa [Tib. bde don tshogs pa], the one that was saying we want Tibetan independence, changed their name into the Tibetan Independent Alliance Party [Tib. bod rang btsan mna' mthun tang]. They even set up the party with Alo Chöndze, Khenjung Lobsang Gyentsen [Tib. mkhan chung blo bzang rgyal mtshan], and Shakabpa. The main one was Shakabpa.

Q: Gyalo Thondub [Tib. rgya lo don grub] was also there.

A: So later those people were in a desperate situation and they came wherever we were going and stayed in different hotels and they submitted a petition saying "First, we are not mentioning about whether Tibet should be independent or not. The local Tibetan Government must accept the Dedön Tsogpa being an office in the local Tibetan Government. This petition was written in Tibetan on a piece of Elephant brand paper produced in India and there were about 15-20 pages.

Q: Did they submit it to the Kalön?

A: Yes, to the Kashag.

Q: They wrote that it must accept the Dedön Tsogpa being under the government as an office, right?

A: Yes, they said they must accept it as an office staying abroad (Tib. chilog [phyi logs]) and they also requested [the Kashag] to support whatever work they did outside financially, etc. Anyway, there were 4-5 points. Since Ngabö was head of the leader's team, he made a copy of it and gave it to me and I translated it right away in the embassy and sent it to the Central Committee.

Q: What were the other points in the petition? I haven't seen this document.

A: The main point was that they said, "Please make a seal for the Dedön Tsogpa and it must be accepted as an office. [in the Tibetan Local Government] and in order to make connections frequently, we need a secret code book". It was a strange secret code book written in Tibetan. Anyway, there were secret numbers.

Q: I have that. They were using this for making connections with the government

A: I also saw that. It had a satin cover.

Q: Did they also write regarding freedom and those things?

A: Yes, they did, and they wrote that the wishes of the Dedön Tsogpa must be fulfilled and its goals must be accomplished. Later, they gave the secret code book [to the Central Committee].

Q: Did they [Kashag] tell them that their petition is okay? What did they answer?

A: They acted two-faced. They [Kashag] thought that if they didn't accept that petition, they will cause trouble and they won't let the Dalai Lama go. If we accepted it, when we go back, it is up to us what we shall do. So they might have told them [Dedön Tsogpa] like this. And the Dedön Tsogpa had a copy of the secret code book and the Kashag had one and both were sealed with a wax seal [Tib. la cha]. So if the seal is broken, then the secret has leaked out. The Kashag wouldn't meddle into who among the Dedön Tsogpa will keep the secret code book but the one Kashag had was kept by Dokhar because they regarded Dokhar as the most trustworthy [Tib. blos 'khel shos], fair and honest [Tib. drang po drang bzahag /bla ma dkon cog]. Surkhang, being the senior kalön would not meddle into these matters. Later, when we came back and arrived at Shigatse, it was strange that one day Dokhar drank chang or liquor and he was not feeling well and he called me and said, "I must offer this to the Central Committee (Ch. zhongyang). If we keep it, I wouldn't use it and people on the other side might cause trouble [Tib. phar phyog kyi rnyog dra bshad yong]." And he gave it [the code book] to the Central Committee along with the unbroken wax seal on it. He said that he didn't even use it once.

Q: Did he [Dokhar] explain to you that we did it like this [Tib. da gase byas pa red], but deep in bottom of our hearts, we didn't have the thought of using it [Tib. gting nas bsam blo de med] ?

A: He said clearly that he didn't even use it once. They [Kashag] were saying if they didn't accept [Dedön Tsogpa's petition], it would cause lot of trouble and it would be hard for all of us to return. So they [Kashag] just duped them [the Dedön Tsogpa people]. After that, there was trouble. Probably, you don't know about that. Regarding whether or not the Panchen Lama should go to Kalimpong, when we arrived at Kolkata, they had already decided to invite the Dalai Lama to come to give dharma teachings and give hand blessing in Kalimpong. About 20,000-30,000 Tibetans from Bhutan and Nepal had gathered there. So they sent many representatives [inviting the Dalai Lama] and the Dedön Tsogpa was acting from behind. The Dalai Lama said that he was going (to visit Kalimpong) and he purposely went to the Panchen Lama's place and told him, "Let's go together" and then we can return from there together to Tibet) and we would be very happy [Tib. dga' dga' spro spro]. To this, the Panchen Lama gave a brief answer saying, "If you are going there, go ahead. I will not cause trouble and stop you from going because I don't have the authority. I was thinking that we should stay for a few days in Kolkata and should send a telegram in the name of both of us and tell the Central Committee to send a special plane to Kolkata to receive us and then let's fly to Beijing in that plane. We have gotten very tired attending meetings and going for the pilgrimages for the past 2-3 months in India, so let's take a rest for 2-3 days and also report to the Central Committee what a hard time we have had, and how hard we worked, and what happened, and also ask the Central Committee what work should we do in Tibet according to the new situation. Let us ask for the Central Committee's instructions. This is my opinion, so don't have the hope of me going to Kalimpong, as I will not go. If you are going there, I will send a telegram to the Central Committee to send a special plane to Kolkata to receive me and I am going to Tibet." At that time, the Dam Airport was already built (north of Lhasa). At that time, the Dalai Lama was the director (Zhuren uyön [Ch.zhuren weiyuan]) of the PCTAR and the Panchen Lama was first Vice-director. Therefore, the Dalai Lama was very angry and then he went to

Kalimpong (alone). After that, there was a big trouble within the Tibetan side when the Dalai Lama came to Shigatse.

Q: Yes, that was very bad. I heard a lot about it, but I am not very clear about this.

A: I will tell you in detail. At that time, the Dalai Lama went to Kalimpong along with all of them including Ngabö. I know this because I was the interpreter for the Dalai Lama and I had to go wherever he went. When he arrived in Kalimpong, the members of the Dedön Tsogpa were there, and he did a lot of religious activities and probably, gave the initiation for the Kalachakra [Tib. dus 'khor dbang chen] and also gave the explanations [Tib. khrid] and gave the people hand blessings. Also, they again they did something regarding the Tibetan independence. [phone interruption] At that time, among the Tibetan people in Kalimpong, there was a very bad rumor spread saying the regarding whether there will be Tibetan independence, is controlled or restricted (Tib. bkag 'doms) by Ngabö who is among the entourage and he is instigating so we must get rid of him (Tib. mepa so [Tib. med pa bzo]). They were saying that they were going to kill him. Probably you know that?

Q: Yes.

A: Then we took the action and Ngabö returned earlier (than the Dalai Lama but) after the Panchen Lama left. Do you know this?

Q: Yes, it was said that his wife was going to give birth to a child, etc., (so he had to leave).

A: He received a telegram in the name of Tseten Drökar [Tib. tshe brtan sgrol dkar] through the post office, not the secret one. So he took the telegram and asked for leave. This was the pretext.

Q: This is true. AloChöndze told me that before he was released from the jail, some people like Sandutshang planned to kill Ngabö, but it didn't work out.

A: Yes, they couldn't put it into action. They had that plan from the early times. At that time, there was the Trade Mission of the Tibetan Government (in Kalimpong) and I was staying there. Ngabö was staying with the entourage. I had to go to the Dalai Lama every day because I was his interpreter. Later, I discussed this problem with Ye Chenzhan of the embassy and put forward a plan to fix a time for a plane (take him to Lhasa). We spread talk outside in the society saying that Ngabö will leave at 3 a.m. and go to the Siliguri airport. Ngabö himself told people like this and we also said the same thing. Internally, however, Ngabö, I and Ye Chenzhan discussed this and decided to leave at 2 a.m., so we really left one hour before (what we were telling people). The road from Kalimpong to Siliguri was good, but it was narrow and steep on the hills.

Q: I have been there. It is dangerous.

A: In some places, two vehicles couldn't pass at one time. Then we drove very fast and arrived at Siliguri before the day broke. There is something else, but I think it is not that useful to you.

Q: What happened in Shigatse?

A: Actually, at that time, the Dalai Lama's mind had already been disturbed and agitated [Tib. 'khrug tshar bzhang/ gy.o 'gul thebs tshar]. The main point of his thoughts [Tib. bsam blo rdogrdog] was that our state is under the Communist Party and we are also [the members of the] Communist Party and he [Dalai Lama] was very much attracted [Tib. sems pa shor] to the capitalist democracy [Tib. ma rtsa'i ring lungs kyi dmangs gtso] saying "This is the real democracy." [Tib. dngos gnas drang gnas dmangs gtso red] Before he went to India, he was the Chairman of the People's National Congress [Tib. rgyal yongs mi dmangs'thus mi tshogs chen gyi uyön zhang] and he attended many meetings. Ten when he (first) came to India, he saw the Parliament of the Indian Congress Party [Tib. rgya gar gros tshogs]. Nehru purposely made the arrangements and held a meeting where the Congress members were debating and hitting each other and he arranged for the Dalai Lama to be an observer (Tib. surshug [zur bzhangs]). At that time, the Dalai Lama found it strange that the ink pots were physically attached to the tables and he told me to ask them why they did that. I said you can ask them directly and later they said that this was to avoid members using the ink pot when they became aggressive and were hitting each other. And then the Dalai Lama said, "This kind of democracy is great! And this is hard to achieve" [Tib. 'di 'dra dmangs gtso ni zhe drag red/ 'di yong khag po red]. This must have been the main point of his thinking, and he was saying that everywhere. Basically, in his first speech in Sikkim when we stayed overnight there, there was the Sikkim Political Officer and at that time, there was also the Sikkim King who gave a welcome party at which the Dalai Lama gave a speech and from then on wherever he went, he never mentioned the word "The historical Sino-Indian Friendly relations [Tib. krung hin lo rgyus thog gi mdza' grogs 'brel ba]. From the beginning, he said "The historical Tibeto-Indian Friendly relations [Tib. bod hin lo rgyus thog gi mdza' grogs 'brel ba]. And when he came to some places like Varanasi and Bodhgaya, when the representatives of the Indian Government gave talks, they talked about Tibetan independence and though the Dalai Lama didn't say that clearly, but he nodded his head implying that is right [Tib. mgo lcog lcog gis yin mdog] and showed a very happy expression [Tib. dga' dga' spro spro]. On the contrary, whenever the Panchen Lama gave speeches he always said, "The historical Sino-Indian Friendly relations." When we rode horses and dismounted the horse, they showed the flag on the vehicles (they were switching to).

Q: I know this. What I don't know is what happened when the Dalai Lama went to Shigatse, and the Tashilhunpo monks looked down on him and there was some trouble. Did you hear about this?

A: On the morning of the 20th of November, he [Dalai Lama] left Lhasa and stayed overnight at Markyang Dzong [Tib. mar rkyang rdzong]. On the next day, he left Markyang and stayed in Shigatse. There was a special residence the 12th Dalai Lama used when he went to Shigatse and the Panchen Lama made all the things like cushions, etc. brand new and told the Dalai Lama to stay there. But the Dalai Lama didn't go there. They [the Tibetan Government officials] just patrolled at that place and the Dalai Lama stayed in the Jidzong [Tib. spyi rdzong] (the Tibetan government's district headquarters). Therefore, the Panchen Lama was very much agitated. At that time, the Panchen Lama had prepared an elaborated party, but the Dalai Lama didn't come. Then the Panchen Lama told the abbots of Tashilhunpo tratsang "Let's eat it." This was the fault of the Dalai Lama.

Q: This was when the Dalai Lama went to India, right?

A: Yes. Since they had this trouble when he went to India, when he came back, the Dalai Lama didn't plan and prepare to go there [Tashilhunpo]. However, the Panchen Lama took the abbots and those people and went through the motions of welcoming the Dalai Lama and they had to go through the procedures like prostrating and drinking tea, etc.

Q: From Markyang he went to Jidzong, right?

A: Yes, he stayed in Jidzong when we went and came back.

Q: Please tell me little bit about 1959 regarding the Dalai Lama going to the show, etc.

A: Later, I knew that this was done according to a plan. They made preparations for that to happen.

Q: Who made it?

A: The revolt was made by the Dalai Lama.

Q: How?

A: You don't know that, right?

Q: What do you mean?

A: The revolt in 1959, was made by the Dalai Lama. You don't know that, right?

Q: It was made from their side, but I don't know clearly who made it.

A: Didn't the Dalai Lama tell you?

Q: Oh! Please tell me this yourself [laughter], though I have some thoughts on it.

A: I will tell you a little bit in detail. I was there from the beginning to the end, and I was the interpreter. Also on the night when the Dalai Lama fled, I saw him fleeing.

Q: Did you see it?

A: Yes, it is useless to tell lies, and I can't make it up.

Q: Please tell me slowly. This is very important.

A: I will tell you how the Dalai Lama himself was involved in that [revolt]. As I mentioned above, the reactionary heads of the groups and there were several thousands of people who had fled from Kham and Amdo were there. When they came, the disturbance had already occurred and they made war in Lhoka and Powo [Tib. spo bo] and they even demolished [Tib. med pa bzo] some offices of the PCTAR and they robbed some offices at the county level [Tib. rdzong rim pa]. At that time, the Central Committee's policy regarded these acts as a security matter for the local Tibetan government and that it was not a matter of national defense [Tib. rgyal srung]. The PLA's job was (national) defense and they had the responsibility for national defense. At that time, there were Tibetan soldiers and they were the local soldiers and the local government was responsible for the local security. So the Tibetan soldiers must do that [quelling the Khambas]. This policy was mentioned clearly and this was told to the PCTAR and I was the interpreter.

Q: When was this?

A: This started from June-July of 1957 after the Dalai Lama came back. At that time, they made the political organization called Chushigandru with the people in Kham and Amdo in order to launch a revolt; the military organization was called the Army to Defend Religion [Tib. Tensungmag; bstan srung dmag]. Some foreigners are confused about this. On the 14th-15th of July in 1957, they offered a golden throne to the Dalai Lama. At that time, they held a very elaborate meeting in Potala for the celebration of the golden throne. There were representative from the monasteries near Lhasa and there were also representative of Chushigandru there. The Dalai Lama gave each of them the blessed ribbon (Tib. sungdū [srung mdud]), khatas and also the protective talisman [Tib. srung ba] made from molded mud of Yamantaka riding a buffalo called in Tibetan Jigje Mahe [Tib. 'jigs byed ma he] [Tib. tshatsha]. This talisman was put in small satin bags. Like this, he regarded them very highly. Before that, the name Chushigandru was kept secret, although we already knew it. After that, Chushigandru did a horse race and they shot guns in a park [Tib. lingga] near the Kuru Bridge and they went to Lhoka openly. Since then, except for Lhasa, the other places were filled with Tensungmag-militias.

In August and September 1957, in Norbulingka, the Dalai Lama met two Tibetan spies and wireless operators who were trained by the CIA and gave them lot of things like talismans. At the Tibetan New Year of 1958, the Dalai Lama had yet to take the geshe exam and he came to the Mönlam Prayer Festival in the Tsulagang Temple from the Potala, he went through the Tromsigang market to the Tsulagang Temple and when he went back, he came through the main gate of the Tsulagang and went to the Potala. In that year, 3-4 days before the Dalai Lama was going from the Tsulagang to the Potala, the Central Committee helped build the road from the Tsulagang to the Potala with good quality pebbles [Tib. rdo hrug]. At that time, they didn't have macadam roads. Also the Central Committee gave the Dalai Lama a car. At that time, he [Dalai Lama] all of sudden went out of the Tsulagang ... [didn't finished the sentence] At that time, in front of the house where the Central Committee's representative lived [the Yuthok House] and near the masses's houses behind that, they [Tibetan soldiers] had stationed guns and in front of the main

gate [of the Tsulagang], the Tibetan soldiers had set up machine guns on two sides and they had stationed soldiers there. They showed the attitude that they are going to make war. At that time, my office was located opposite the Tibet Work Committee [Tib. bod las don u yon lhan khang]. At that time, Tan Guansan, the Political Commissar [Tib. chabsrid u yon] of the Tibet Military Area Command [Tib. bod dmag khul khang] telephoned me and called me there. When I went there, Tan Guansan was aggressive and told me to go right now to Sambo Tsewang Rinzin [Tib. bsam pho tshe dbang rig 'dzin] who was then the Major General [Ch. shaojiang] of the PLA and Vice Commander [Tib. fusi ling yuan] of the Tibet Military Area Command and tell him, "All the Tibetan soldiers stationed around the Central Committee's representative's House must be withdrawn in about 10-15 minutes. If they withdraw, that's it. If they don't withdraw, tell him that we are going to fire with cannons." Tan Guansan told me to deliver this message and when I went to deliver the message, at that time, behind the Potala, they were doing horse race where they all wear the ancient costumes and shoot [old] guns and arrows. Sambo Tsewang Rinzin was a Kalön and all the Kalön including Ngabö were watching the horse race from a tent. Then I whispered and delivered the message to Sambo saying that Tan Guansan said that unless you withdrew the soldiers from around Yuthog (House) where the Central Committee's representative is staying in 10-15-20 minutes, he is going to fire cannons. Sambo was shocked [Tib. honthor] and extremely scared and asked me how I came there. I said I rode a bicycle. He had ridden a horse. He told me that he is going to the Tsulagang because the Dalai Lama was in the Tsulagang and I told him to ride his horse and go ahead, I will follow you riding my bicycle. I took a cadre with me, and we reached near the gate of the Tsulagang at the same time. Then he asked me whether I am going to stay there and I said that I came to deliver a message and I am going to tell the Gusung Depön. When I delivered the message to the Gusung Depön, he was extremely scared and told me, "I have a phone, please make a phone call to Tan Guansan saying that I didn't know anything about that. It was probably done by those bad people like the battalion leaders (Tib. rupön [ru dpon])."

Q: Those were Gusung (Tibetan Bodyguard Regiment) soldiers, right?

A: Phüntso Tashi [Tib. phun tshogs bkra shis] was the depön of the Gusung Magar. Then he sent some rupön and they called back the soldiers.

Q: What were the soldiers doing there?

A: I heard that the soldiers said their leader gave the order and they didn't know anything about it. I didn't ask the soldiers myself. In July or August [1958], the Kashag held a tsondu gyendzom (Full National Assembly meeting) and said that the power must be centralized [Tib. dbang cha gcigs dud]. In the tsondu gyendzom, they needed representatives from the 2nd rank to the 7th rank including the Shape. The content of meeting was to have the Kashag's power centralized and 'clear up the doubts of the Central Committee and quell the revolt'. At that time, the revolt had taken place everywhere. They took this name and Dalai Lama gave this name and he gave the order. However, in reality, in this meeting, the content changed into centralizing the power of the Kashag and to challenge [Tib. kha gtad bcag] the Central Committee. Outwardly, it was to be that Ngabö must preside over the meeting and Ngabö didn't understand it and he was planning to do that. But later when Ngabö came to know about the meeting, he called me and at that time the Vice Party Secretary [Ch. shuji Tib. gzhon pa] of the Tibet Work Committee was Zhou Renshan and he told me to report this to Zhou Renshan and I did. Ngabö wanted very much to lead this meeting and probably he was hoping that it will be good to preside and do something in the tsondu because the Tibetan Government officials had their minds agitated (Tib. trug ['khrug]). Then Secretary Zhou said, "You should not do this work at all because this is a plot (Tib. yogyu [g.yo sgyu]) to have you sink in the mud. It will be best to give this work to Surkhang because basically he is the senior Shape. You should not touch it at all". Then Ngabö became attentive and he was not at that meeting.

Q: Ngabö didn't go to the meeting, right?

A: Yes. Before the meeting, the members had sworn in front of the Tara Statue in Norbulinga which was said to have talked [Tib. sgrol ma gsung byon ma] and put their seals on the pledge (Tib. gengya [gan rgya]) that nobody will leak the contents of the meeting. Whoever leaks the contents, even if it is Surkhang, he will be destroyed (Tib. tor [gtor]) [killed]. And they put the pledge in a trunk and it was kept by the Kashag. Then they held the meeting from August 1958 to the end of the year for about 3-4 months till the 29th of the 12th lunar when the Gutor [Tib. dgu gtor] Festival was held. The Dalai Lama knew the contents of the meeting and later they made a resolution (Tib. tröchö [gros chod]) with the content of the meeting which said "We shall look at the situation in Tibet and on an appropriate occasion [Tib. dus tshod 'os 'tshams shig la], we shall take [Tib. gdan 'dren zhus] the Dalai Lama to a safe place [Tib. btsan sa] and in Lhasa and whole of Tibet, the people of Tibet will fight with the PLA. The goal would be to expel the PLA from Tibet." And they sealed this resolution and put it in the archive [Tib. yig tshags] of the Kashag. This was the cause of the revolt.

In the 12th lunar month in 1958, at the Gutor Festival, we went there as we did every year since we came to Tibe, in order to show that we have good relations and they [the Tibetan Government] would invite the leaders of the Tibet Work Committee, the Tibet Military Area Command and the PCTAR to the Gutor Festival to watch the religious dance held in the white building of the Potala. First they would meet the Dalai Lama and then they watched the dance, sitting on well-arranged cushions. On that day, the representative of the Tibet Military Area Command was the newly arrived Major General Commander [Ch. shaojiang siling] of the Tibet Military Area Command Deng Shaodong, who had been in Tibet just for 3-4 months. At that time, there was no shuji (secretary) in the Tibet Work Committee but the Secretary General Guo Xinlan was there and the two of them attended the Gutor. At that time, the main officer in charge of the Tibet Military Area Command was the Political Commissar Tan Guansan, but probably he was thinking something as he told me to send an interpreter for Deng Shaodong and Guo Xinlan and he told me not to go. At that time, I had trained about 4-5 interpreters who were good in both Chinese and Tibetan and I sent one of the best ones. At that time, the Dalai Lama had told Deng Shaodong "My older brother Lobsang Samden [Tib. blo bzang bsam gtan] told me that the Dance and Song group of the Tibet Military Area Command have come back from China after two years training and I heard that there are very good items. So I like very much to watch it" [Note: Actually Lobsang Samden was not in Tibet then. He had stayed in India after the Buddhajayanti in 1957, so this part of the account is incorrect]. Deng Shaodong said "That is no problem, you can watch it whenever you want to. Give me a few days to get prepared and the Dance and Song group will come to Norbulinga and perform it for you only." Then the Dalai Lama said, "This will not do because in Norbulinga we don't have a stage and those big and colorful lamps. So please get prepared and I will come to the Tibet Military Area Command Headquarters to

watch it." He said that because in the big hall in Tibet Military Area Command Headquarters you have the lamps and those things
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